

Pam
Misc.

1998

THE CHURCHES AND AMERICAN POLICY IN THE FAR EAST

Adopted by
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE CHURCHES
OF CHRIST IN AMERICA

Atlanta, Georgia

December 6, 1949



Department of International Justice and Goodwill
of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ
in America

297 Fourth Ave., New York 10, N. Y.

Additional copies: \$2.00 per 100 copies

THE advance of Communism in the Far East, signaled by the proclamation on October 1, 1949, of the "People's Republic of China," is a matter of deep concern to the American people. Despite developments deemed to be inimical to our cherished democratic ideals, it remains within the power of the United States to help shape the destiny of the 1,200,000,000 people of Asia.

This is true because the record of our nation, in the main, has been one of sincere friendship for the peoples of the Far East. The right of the Chinese people to develop their political institutions without interference from without has long been a cardinal principle of American policy. For fifty years our Government has opposed efforts to establish "spheres of influence" in China. The "Open Door" and related policies encouraged the Chinese people to resist encroachment upon their sovereign rights. In opposing Japan's Twenty-One Demands, the United States championed the territorial integrity of China. In remitting to the Chinese Government the larger part of the Boxer indemnity payments, our country sought to build a bridge of understanding between East and West. Our nation has stood before the world as the advocate of political freedom for subject peoples. In pursuance of this policy the Philippine Islands achieved their independence. Influential voices in America have been lifted in support of human rights in Asia. The traditional American mood, respecting the peoples of Asia, has been one of opposition to economic slavery, political tutelage, and dictatorship of the few over the many.

Despite this record of American friendship for the peoples of the Far East, the ideological clash and power struggle which today engulf the world have adversely affected the moral position of our nation in Asia. This has been due, in part, to the spreading of hostile propaganda and, in part, to the seeming inability of our nation to formulate a policy related to the realities of the revolutionary era emerging in Asia.

We believe the time has come for the United States unequivocally to restate its concern for those Asiatic peoples who today are struggling for higher standards of living and for equal rights within the world community.

We believe the United States should reaffirm with great vigor and clarity the long-standing American determination to work for the territorial integrity and political freedom of Oriental peoples.

We believe our churches would welcome a bold proclamation of policy by the President of the United States, delivered before a joint session of the Congress, the purpose of which would be to encourage the peoples of Asia to believe that the best way to achieve their awakened desires is not civil war and revolution with their dangers of a permanent totalitarianism under the banners of an alien ideology, but an orderly and progressive march toward the goal of a free and democratic Asia.

We believe the further advance of Communism in China and Asia cannot permanently be stopped by military action. Such military assistance as the United States placed at the disposal of the Chinese Nationalists proved unavailing. The reasons for this are many, but among these reasons is the fact that the civil war in China is not only a test of arms, it is also, in part, a social and political convulsion of revolutionary proportions. Similarly, the thrust of Communism in other parts of Asia is only in part a military operation; in other and more important respects it has taken advantage of a mass protest against grinding poverty, economic injustice, social maladjustment, and political subservience to the West. Accordingly, neither the creation of a Pacific military alliance, nor the granting of military assistance by the United States to the non-Communist forces of the Far East, would alone suffice to establish in that area the conditions of a just and durable peace.

Nor do we believe that the challenge to the West deriving from the revolutionary upsurge of Asia's millions can be met by the hasty improvisation of national policy designed to counter the spread of Communism first in one country, then in another. It is a matter genuinely to be deplored that the United States, with its democratic traditions and its long established commitment to freedom for subject and dependent peoples, has become aligned in popular world opinion with the maintenance of the status quo, rather than with the forces making for a new Asia. This has been due, in part, to the confusion in the public mind regarding the developing crisis in Asia. The fear that Russia might control Asia must not tempt us into a

reliance upon military strategy when it is obvious that Communist influence cannot be arrested apart from a general effort to further the economic betterment and growing independence of the Asiatic peoples. The real issue is whether or not our government is prepared to advance the greater welfare of the peoples of Asia, with higher standards of living, and with cultural, social, and political institutions which will accord with the free choice of the peoples directly concerned.

We believe the United States should promote in every possible way the economic well-being of the peoples of the Far East. An improved standard of living for Asia's millions is essential to the establishment of democratic institutions in the Orient. The primary resources with which the West must promote peace in the Pacific are ideas, not atomic bombs; food, not guns; plowshares, not swords; tools of production, not implements of destruction. If Communism thrives under conditions of poverty, hunger, and social unrest, so, too, will democracy advance under conditions of social and economic improvement.

Our government, accordingly, should energetically support the United Nations program of technical assistance, a program which has been reinforced by President Truman's proposal "for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of under-developed areas." This technical assistance should be designed to contribute to the freedom and livelihood of the peoples concerned, under whatever forms of government these values can be advanced.

It is important, too, that the United States cooperate wholeheartedly with the United Nations' Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. This Commission aims to increase agricultural production, stimulate industrial development, promote international trade, encourage technical training, and control of the flood waters of the great rivers in whose valleys there lives half the population of Asia and the Far East. These are aims which can and must be achieved if Asiatic peoples are to be delivered from the menace of a totalitarianism attended by violence and coercion.

The success of any program of technical assistance, however, will depend not alone upon industrial and scientific know-how but also upon the spiritual outlook and the cultural qualifications of the experts who are assigned to Asia. In

addition to their specialized competence such persons should be well grounded in the cultural heritage of the Far East. They should be made acquainted with the language, customs, and ideals of the people to whom they are sent. Otherwise the cause of democracy might be irreparably damaged, however much the economic status of the Asiatic peoples might be improved.

We believe the United States should proclaim its purpose to work for an early peace settlement with Japan. It should be possible to negotiate a peace settlement with Japan, the effect of which would be to establish a mutuality of interests between that country and her neighbors and with the West. The creation in Japan of a free state, under conditions which would safeguard the rights and ensure the dignities of her people and which would accelerate the processes of economic and moral recovery, could be a powerful stimulus in the evolution of a democratic Asia.

We believe the United States, in collaboration with the democratic States of the West, should carry forward a program of continuing consultation among their respective Ambassadors, Ministers and Consular Officers with the view to clarifying the policy of government in relation to the political, economic, and cultural needs of Asiatic peoples. If such regional consultations are deemed to be necessary for the Atlantic States, they are no less necessary for those States having a common interest in Asia. As a part of this consultation process the United States might well send to and receive from Asiatic countries, deputations of journalists, educators, law-makers, labor, industrial and religious leaders, both for the purpose of establishing a community of interests as between East and West and for the enlightenment of the American people respecting the emerging situation in Asia.

We believe the United States, in cooperation with the United Nations, should labor incessantly for the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for the peoples of Asia. The status of inferiority thus far imposed upon these people by the West is coming to an end. Since the War India, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Burma, Ceylon, have acquired their independence. The United States of Indonesia is in the process of formation. This rapid succession of peoples toward political freedom heralds the dawn of a new era in the Far East. The International Trusteeship System of the United Nations

provides opportunity for the United States and other member nations to advance the economic, social, and educational progress of the peoples of the Trust Territories and to develop self-government. The United States, which has entered into a trust agreement respecting the former Japanese Mandated Islands and which is the sole power occupying Okinawa, has it within its power to provide a living demonstration of its purpose to respect the rights and to promote the well-being of the inhabitants of these areas. Support for and participation in the activities of the Trusteeship Council should be regarded by the United States as a priority of the highest importance.

We believe the United States, as an earnest of its purpose to respect the rights and freedoms and dignities of Asiatic peoples, should complete the process of amending its immigration and naturalization laws so that, within the quota system, all discriminatory statutes based upon considerations of color or nationality, would be removed. All Oriental peoples, now racially ineligible for citizenship, should be granted the same status in relation to our immigration and naturalization laws as is or may be accorded the peoples of China, India and the Philippine Islands.

In its more fundamental aspects the crisis in Asia cannot be met by the actions of government. There is a spiritual vacuum in the Far East which must be filled if there is to be achieved a free Asia at peace with itself and with the world. This spiritual vacuum can be filled by the Christian community. The historic religions of Asia, however much they may have shaped the cultural patterns of the past, lack the dynamics which are required to give spiritual direction to the revolutionary upsurge of Asia's millions. In Christ there can be found the power permanently to transform the old order in Asia into a new order of democratic freedom and of social justice.

We point to the faithful and courageous Christian minority in Asia with admiration and thanksgiving. We call upon the Christian community of America to join with the Christian community in Asia in advancing a movement of spiritual reformation as daring in its conception and as revolutionary in its effects as was the Christian enterprise of the early Apostles. Christian youth in Asia, America and other lands should be encouraged to participate in a veritable crusade to bring the whole of the Far East into

a knowledge of Christ. Our churches, colleges and theological seminaries should undertake the enlistment of a vastly expanded missionary personnel firmly grounded in the Christian faith and with a thorough understanding of the methods and techniques by which secular ideologies are propagated. New types of missionary endeavor should be explored which would more effectively relate the gospel of Christ to the struggles of Oriental peoples for economic and political justice. Nor can the influence of the Christian gospel be made pervasive among the masses of Asia as long as Christians of the West give so sparingly of their earthly treasure to exalt the name of Christ in lands other than our own. If the secular influences currently sweeping over Asia are to be countered by the healing and reconciling influence of Christianity, our people must be prepared substantially to increase their total giving for the world mission of the Church.

The Christian enterprise in Asiatic lands is believed by its critics and by many of its friends to be too much dominated by the patterns of the West. The churches of Christ in America, in their relations with Orientals, should seek to widen their geographical thinking to the end that Christ may be received among the people as One for whom there is no East or West. It is the inescapable duty of Christians everywhere to seek a spiritual unity in Christ that transcends all considerations of race or nationality. Only in this manner can Christianity be made a living and dynamic force among Asiatic peoples.

We believe it is unrealistic to suppose that the old patterns of missionary activity, predicated as they have too often been upon denominational priorities, will suffice to win Asia to Christ. The churches of the United States, therefore, should further consolidate their ministry of evangelism, education and social services throughout the Asiatic world. Pride of sectarian heritage must be transcended. Christians journey from the West to the East to exalt Him Who is the Saviour of the World and as leaders of the Younger Churches visit the West to enrich and quicken our faith.